United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Advance group of 60 military observers from United Nations Protection Force in Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR) are en route to Sarajevo to assess security situation at airport; will report to Secretary-General.

+ Secretary-General's Special Representative for Cambodia, Yasushi Akashi, announces that UNTAC will go ahead with second phase of cease-fire as planned on 13 June, despite unwillingness of Democratic Kampuchea to comply with Paris Accords of last October.

+ Secretary-General and President of Brazil inaugurate project to improve condition of children in Brazil.

+ Speakers in the continuing general debate at Rio Earth Summit state their concerns about the degradation of the environment.

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An advance group of 60 military observers of the United Nations Protection Force in Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR), headed by the Chief of Staff of the United Nations Force, Brigadier General Louis McKenzie, left Belgrade this morning en route for Sarajevo, to assess the situation at the local airport, according to a United Nations spokesman today.

The advance group will be joined by another 60 observers borrowed from the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) and the United Nations Iraq Kuwait Observer Mission (UNIKOM), who will arrive in Sarajevo in the next few days. The Group will report to the Secretary-General on the security situation at the airport. In addition, 50 French experts in airport security were due to arrive in Belgrade today. The whole team was expected to be in place by the weekend, the spokesman said.

On Monday, 8 June, the Security Council authorized the Secretary-General to deploy military observers to Sarajevo "when he finds it appropriate", as a first step to ensure unimpeded delivery of humanitarian supplies to Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a second step, a 1,000-member infantry battalion would be deployed to ensure the immediate security of the airport, allowing civilian

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personnel to be sent in and the airport to open for humanitarian and official flights. The Security Council resolution stipulates however that the deployment of the troops is contingent upon "an effective and durable cease-fire" in Sarajevo.

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Yasushi Akashi, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Cambodia, announced today that despite Democratic Kampuchea's unwillingness to comply with the Paris Peace Accords signed last October, the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) would go ahead with the second phase of the peace plan as intended, on June 13. He made the announcement at a meeting of Cambodia's Supreme National Council.

According to phase two of the plan, UNTAC will begin to regroup and canton selected forces of the three other parties who, with Democratic Kampuchea, were signatories to the Paris Agreement. The troops are to put themselves under the control of the United Nations peacekeeping forces, surrender their arms and wait to be demobilized.

Mr. Akashi stressed that free movement of United Nations troops throughout Cambodia was essential if UNTAC was to operate effectively and fulfil its mandate. Should Democratic Kampuchea decide to rejoin the peace process, he said, UNTAC stood ready to accommodate them. While urging maximum self-restraint, he said that if they decided to step up their military activities, UNTAC "will have to bear in mind the right to self-defense of the other Cambodian parties".

Mr. Akashi has sent a report to the Secretary-General, who is currently in Rio de Janeiro, and will keep the Security Council informed of further developments through the Secretary-General.

The Special Representative reported earlier this week that while the overall situation was improving, cease-fire violations were still occurring in the Kompong Thom province where the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea had recently laid new mines.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and President Fernando Collor this morning inaugurated a Presidential project consisting of 5,000 centres throughout the State of Rio de Janeiro, providing food, education and social services to an estimated seven million children.

The Secretary-General was scheduled to depart this afternoon for a tour of the Rio Itaipu dam, the largest in the world, located between the States of Parana and Santa Catarina. Mr. Boutros-Ghali would then hold a number of internal meetings with senior officials of the United Nation system, including the Executive Secretary of Economic Commission for Latin America and the

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Caribbean (ECLAC), Gert Rosenthal.

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Attempts to dilute or avoid commitments to additional concessional finance for environmental programmes amounted to self-deception, Y. Seyyid Abdulai, Director-General of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Fund for International Development, told the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, yesterday.

He said the South was not now the major offender in environmental pollution, but it was bound to become the greater polluter eventually. "Either the people of the earth prosper together", he said, "or we will eventually choke to death together".

The Russian Federation's Minister for Ecology and Natural Resources told the Summit that the unreliability of Russia's nuclear energy facilities and the improper storage of its nuclear waste posed a major danger to the world's environmental well-being.

With one-sixth of the earth's total land mass, Russia's environmental situation was critical to the world as a whole, he said. Unfortunately, now that it was attempting to correct the environmental oversights of the past, it lacked the necessary financial investment. It would have to develop its own resources, one of which was timber. But, aside from their economic value, Russia's forests played an important part in slowing global warming and partial deforestation could have a drastic impact on the climate.

Albert Gore, a United States Senator, speaking on behalf of the Global Legislators' Organization for a Balanced Environment, underlined that Governments could only do a certain amount; beyond that it was up to the people of every country to recognize their own connection to the Earth and the responsibility that comes with it. The Summit, he stated, was already a success because every nation in the world was thinking about the same challenge at the same time, in a new way.

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